(a) whether it is a fact that lakhs of rupees have been embezzled in sub post offices of Lal Bagh in Chhindwara, Madhya Pradesh and in the village Mordongari by tampering with the savings accounts of the account holders;

(b) if so, when and how this embezzlement came to light;

(c) the steps being taken by Government in this regard; and

(d) the procedure through which the account holders whose amount has been embezzled, will get back their amount?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI JYOTIRADITYA MADHAVRAO SCINDIA): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The case of Lalbagh Sub Post Office (SO) came to light on 19.03.2007 on the telephonic information from Shrimati Anita Rai, the then Sub Postmaster, Lalbagh SO about misappropriation of money in Recurring Deposit Accounts. The case of Mordongari Branch Post Office (BO) was detected on 20.11.2007 by the Sub Divisional Inspector (Post) during the course of verification of some passbooks at the time of annual inspection.

(c) The departmental inquiry was conducted in the case and Shrimati Anita Rai, SPM, Lalbagh was placed under suspension on 20.03.2007, while Shri Devendra Kumar Wadia, Branch Postmaster, Mordongari BO was placed under put off duty on 20.11.2007. The case of Lalbagh was also reported to Central Bureau of Investigation whereas the case of Mordongari BO was reported to police.

(d) The defrauded account holders are advised to prefer their claims, which are examined and justified claims are settled as per rules.

Licence to Swan Telecom

1028. SHRI DHARAM PAL SABHARWAL: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have seen newspaper report "DoT seeks details in Swan licence issue" appearing in Financial Express, New Delhi on 17 December, 2008;

(b) if so, the reasons that Swan Telecom has been given licence by paying Rs. 1,537 crore at a price discovered in 2001 and not at current price;

(c) the estimated loss Government has incurred by not giving licence to Swan Telecom at the current price;

(d) whether Government has initiated a probe through CVC/CBI for allegations of granting licence at lower price, allocation of spectrum and inter-circle roaming pacts with BSNL; and

(e) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI JYOTIRADITYA MADHAVRAO SCINDIA): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) to (e) The issues of granting Unified Access Services (UAS) Licenses to various companies including M/s Swan Telecom Pvt. Ltd. in year 2008, as per UAS license Guidelines dated 14.12.2005 for an upfront entry fee at a price discovered in 2001 and allocation of spectrum to these companies, have been raised by 'Dr. Arvind Gupta in his Writ Petition (Civil) No. 7815 of 2008 before Hon'ble High Court of Delhi in the matter of Dr. Arvind Gupta *Vs* Union of India' and the matter is presently *sub-judice*.

As far as the roaming pacts of Bharat Sanchar Nigam Ltd. (BSNL) with M/s. Swan Telecom is concerned, BSNL has stated that all the decisions in this regard have been taken by the BSNL Board/Management after due diligence and considering BSNL's business interest at every step.

Vacant posts in BSNL, Gujarat

1029. SHRI PRAVEEN RASHTRAPAL: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that there are 96 per cent vacancies against the sanctioned strength as far as the post of DGM (Finance) is concerned in the Office of BSNL, Gujarat;

(b) if so, how the Department can function with such situation where there are only one DGM against the requirement of 25;

(c) whether it is a fact that there are 45 per cent vacancies in Group B officers in the Office of the BSNL, Gujarat; and

(d) the reasons for important posts of Group A and B not filled either by promotion or direct recruitment in the engineering cadre and accounts category of the Department in BSNL, Gujarat?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI JYOTIRADITYA MADHAVRAO SCINDIA): (a) Yes, Sir. There is 96% vacancies against the sanctioned strength of DGM (Finance) in Gujarat Circle.

(b) CAO (*Ad-hoc*) officers working in Gujarat Circle, who were given DGM scale as per time bound up-gradation of IDA pay scale policy introduced in BSNL, have been ordered to look after the duties of DGM (Finance) in circle. Seventeen DGM (Finance) posts are filled up on look after basis.

(c) Yes, Sir.

(d) **Action taken to fill up Group 'A' Posts**:

BSNL is presently following Recruitment Rules/Promotion Policy of Department of Telecommunications for promotion of eligible Executives to Group 'A' level.

BSNL has also expedited finalization of its Recruitment Rules for Group 'A' officers/Executives in order to appoint Executives from open market to man its vacant posts, including those of Accounts and Finance services.